

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 169 without my signature.

I remain supportive of reasonable efforts to eradicate the historical trend of women earning less than men for doing the same work, however I still do not believe the provisions of this bill or last year's Assembly Bill 2317 are necessary in order to achieve this goal.

Current state and federal laws forbid paying an individual lower wages on account of gender and provide stiff civil and criminal penalties against employers that do so. The elimination of judicial discretion to modify the penalty coupled with the massive increases in fines will do nothing more than increase frivolous litigation and could lead to the same "shakedown" lawsuits that the citizens of California voted to curb last year by passing Proposition 64.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger